

Vichy France: Origins, History and Legacy

Coordinator: Raoul Oreskovic

As of June 1940, the French Third Republic no longer existed. France was ruled by an anti-republican regime with a fascist ideology actively collaborating with Nazi Germany. The years 1940-44 were darkened by increasing collaboration and repression as well as persecutions, imprisonment, torture and the deportation of Jews, refugees, and masons. France's ideals prevailed due to its armed resistance, the opposition of many ordinary Frenchmen and the contribution of French forces fighting with the Allies. We look into the origins of French anti-Semitism, the anti-parliamentary and fascist ideology among intellectuals, writers and politicians. We review the history of Vichy and its current legacy. We conclude with the liberation, the trials and the purges of collaborators and the belated French apology to Vichy's victims.

Reading:

Text: *Vichy France- Old Guard and New Order 1940-1944* by Robert O. Paxton; (Columbia U. Press, 2001, ISBN 0231-12469-4 (paper), \$29.52)

Additional materials to be sent by email.

Raoul Oreskovic is an international energy trader. He has coordinated previous study groups on South American literature and 14th Century Europe.

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Film clips to be shown in class.

Reading assignments: 60-80 pages per week.

Week 1- The trauma of WWI, anti-Semitism and the rise of French fascism, the crisis of the 1930's.

Week 2- The defeat of 1940, exodus and armistice. Occupation by Germany and Italy. Vichy government.

Week 3- The Resistance, the communists, the underground, De Gaulle and Free France forces.

Week 4- The Collaboration. Writers and intellectuals, French literary fascism, Vichy legislation.

Week 5- The victims: Jews, free masons, refugees, resistant fighters, French anti-Semitism, the Jewish laws, the camps.

Week 6- Opposition to the Vichy regime: writers, civil servants, the righteous gentiles, the underground press. French forces fighting with the Allies.

Week 7- Life under occupied France. Vichy propaganda, newspapers and exhibitions.

Week 8- Active collaboration. Militia, tortures, atrocities.

Week 9- The tide turns: Algeria-Morocco campaign, German occupation of the "free zone", allies landing in Provence.

Week 10- The liberation, De Gaulle government. Purges and trials.

Week 11- The legacy of Vichy: Legislation, infrastructure. Collaborators and the Fifth Republic.

Week 12- French responsibility for the Vichy years. Resurgence of anti-Semitism and neo-fascism.